(e) what steps have been taken to prevent misuse of the bus service for smuggling and illegal traffic of arms, drugs and humans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (e) During the second round of India-Pakistan technical meeting held in September 2005 on the subject, it was decided to operationalize the Amritsar-Lahore bus service by first half of November 2005. The operationalisation of the bus service was, however, postponed due to the earthquake that hit Pakistan on October 8, 2005. Fresh dates for the trial run and the signing of the agreement are being worked out with Pakistan. Government will take all security implications into consideration, and people will be able to travel on the bus only after due procedure and checks have been completed.

Indo-Iran gas pipeline project

†191. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there would be any negative impact on gas pipeline project as India is not supporting the nuclear programme of Iran;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government of Iran in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The Iranian Embassy in New Delhi had clarified on September 28, 2005 that agreements on the LNG deal and gas pipeline between the two countries were "still in force and passing through their normal process." Talks on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project are progressing. The 2nd Indo-Iran Special Joint Working Group on gas pipeline project was held in Tehran on October 24, 2005.

Foreign Minister's Pakistan visit

†192. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the former Minister of External Affairs was on a tour of Pakistan recently;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.